

SPEECH

OF

HON. T. L. HARRIS, OF ILLINOIS,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 25, 1850,

*In Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the President's Message transmitting the Constitution of California.*

Mr. HARRIS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I know not that at this stage of the debate I can say anything worthy of the attention of the committee, or that will throw any new light upon the topics under consideration. This discussion has been greatly protracted, and from the number of speeches already made, both here and in the Senate, and from the character and ability of those gentlemen who have spoken, it would seem that the subject ought to be, if it is not, entirely exhausted. Little remains but to notice some of the points which have sprung out of the discussion, rather than out of the simple question, upon which it is based. I shall proceed in the course I have marked out to pursue, although I feel assured, that after the two hours of excitement through which the House has just passed, I can hardly expect any remarks of mine will command that notice which, perhaps, under other circumstances, they might receive.

Before I do so, let me state what I judge to be the simple matter in difference on this question. By the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States acquired some five hundred and twenty thousand square miles of territory, for the protection of the inhabitants of which, legislation is necessary, either in the erection of territorial governments, or in the admission of it in proper subdivisions into the Union as States. The prevailing, and indeed universal opinion at the North is, that this territory is now free, and the general desire is that it shall ever remain free; while at the South, the desire is that it may, at least a large portion of it, become slave territory, or that it may remain open to the admission of slavery. This is a short statement of the whole question and ground of controversy, without considering the various shades of opinion entertained, either of the good or evil of slavery, or of the propriety or constitutional power for Congress to legislate upon the subject.

From this condition of things, two distinct propositions have emanated. One is, the admission of California as a State, now, as she has presented herself, with her constitution as she has framed it, and with her boundaries as they have been designated; the other is, the organization of governments for the remaining portions of the territories, either of a State or territorial form. On the first question, a portion of the South tell us they will make a *test* for the existence of the Union; while on the last, it is openly declared by many, that the erection of territorial governments

by Congress for these territories, prohibiting slavery, shall be cause for a dissolution of this Union, or for secession. I regret that these declarations, in their threatening form, have been made. They have never been necessary or proper for the attainment of any object which ought to be desired by the South. If the South has been apprehensive that a course of legislation would be here urged by the North, which she judged would be detrimental to her interests, or an infraction of her rights, and which she desired to stay or avert, it was not necessary, to the accomplishment of those objects, that such declarations should be made as have been made, or such scenes enacted as we have witnessed in this House during the present session. Had gentlemen from the South but generally spoken in the tone of the esteemed and eloquent gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. WELLBORN,] who addressed the committee some weeks since, or in the noble and impassioned language of the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. McDOWELL,] in his speech at the last session, which has been so universally read and admired, this whole difficulty might have been settled in a very short time, and to the general satisfaction of all parties and sections of the country. I regret that they have not; and I desire that, after such vaunts of chivalry, and such threats as have been made by some of the hot-headed gentlemen from the South on this floor—if it should so be that any northern gentlemen should be found voting with them upon this question—that they will not consider such votes gained to their cause by the course they have thought proper to pursue, and that, in any event, they will not take it ill, if some of the charges made by them against the North, are noticed and repelled—not in the spirit in which they have been made, but solely for the vindication of the truth.

Mr. Chairman, I am for the admission of California as a State into this Union—California as she is, with her constitution and proposed boundaries. I wish her to be admitted now; I wish no *remanding*—a thing that never was done at all, and never ought to be done in such a case as this. The constitution of California is all that could be desired, and in my judgment will compare favorably with the constitution of any of the States. It is eminently republican. Her boundaries are too large to meet my approbation, but after the most careful inquiry, as to the propriety of making them less, I am satisfied that we can now do nothing better, either for her or for ourselves, than to



take her as she is, with her vast commercial prospects, her untold treasures, and her rapidly-increasing, intelligent, and enterprising population. It is objected to the admission of California, that the President has improperly interfered in its organization, and that without his interference, through a certain gentleman, late a member of this House, she never would have applied for admission in the manner she has, and with such a constitution as she has presented. However improperly the appointment of an emissary to California may have been made, it is not my belief that it had the slightest influence upon the decision of the convention, or upon the people of California, and I am doubly satisfied of this after hearing the clear and forcible speech made on yesterday by the gentleman from Oregon, [Mr. THURSTON.] The organization of government in California, was the work of the people, urged by the necessity which existed from the neglect of Congress. If the people have a right to govern themselves, they have a right to originate government. The people of California have nobly exercised that right, and now ask Congress but to confirm what they have done. It will afford me pleasure to vote for that confirmation at the earliest possible moment. It will be a grand event, when that star of our empire from the West, shall be placed in the constellation of the Union, never to set, but like the sparkling gems from her mountains, shall flash the rays of light and liberty across the distant waters of the Pacific forever.

But, Mr. Chairman, we are told that the North seeks to exclude the South from these territories, and thereby confer exclusive benefits upon themselves. I am not aware, Mr. Chairman, of any design so to exclude the South, nor do I perceive how any inequality of rights would be established either by the admission or exclusion of slavery. If it be admitted, every northern man can possess himself of, and carry with him there, the same property that a southern man can; and on the other hand, if it be excluded, every southern citizen can take the same property there that any northern one can. The rights of both North and South will remain the same in any event. The political objection which the North has to the extension of slavery, over and above what they esteem its moral and social objections, is, the inequality which it works in the representation and influence of the States in the General Government. As an example of this, by taking the vote of the last presidential election, and calling that of South Carolina the same as Alabama, and classing Delaware (which Mr. CALHOUN calls neutral) as a free State, which from its small number of slaves may properly be done in this estimate, we shall have the slave States giving 894,329 votes, and the free States 1,981,810 votes, making a difference of 1,087,491 votes. This gives in the South one presidential elector for every 7,054 votes, and in the North one presidential elector for every 11,657 votes, while it gives each Representative in Congress from the South but an average of 9,936 votes, and at the North an average of 14,155 votes. These, I believe, are some of the reasons which influence many in their opposition to the extension of slavery—men, too, who will ever stand by all the guaranties of the Constitution, as it respects slavery where it now exists.

But, Mr. Chairman, there never was, in my opinion, any good reason for the agitation of the question of slavery in California. Others have thought differently. Some have agitated this subject from motives of duty, but by far the largest number, in my judgment, both at the North and the South, for political purposes alone. If slavery never can exist in California, on account of physical laws, which are insurmountable, then the northern man accomplishes nothing by its prohibition, and the southern man gains nothing by the omission of that prohibition. If the information given us from all sources is correct, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. CONRAD] is right, when he says "that it would be about as easy to introduce the 'culture of the cotton and sugar plants on the 'parched plains and snow-capped mountains of 'that country, as permanently to establish slavery 'there.'" A Senator from Tennessee [Mr. BELL] says, that "while the present organization of material creation stands, African slavery can never 'find a foothold in New Mexico;" and a Senator from North Carolina, [Mr. BADGER,] I believe, expressed a similar belief that slavery can never exist in that country. Mr. WEBSTER thinks it never can exist there any more than amid "the everlasting snows of Canada," and that an act of Congress, excluding slavery from it, would be a thing unnecessary—would wound the feelings of others, and "do disgrace to his own understanding." Mr. CLAY also intimates that slavery never can go there, and says to the South: "If 'nature has pronounced the doom of slavery in 'these territories—if she has declared by her immutable laws that slavery cannot and shall not 'exist there—who can you reproach but nature 'and nature's God?" Mr. Secretary WALKER expressed an opinion, six years ago, that slavery would never pass beyond the Del Norte. Mr. Buchanan said, in 1847, that it "*was morally impossible*" for slavery to go there; and General CASS in his Nicholson letter expressed the same opinion. Other distinguished authorities might be multiplied to any extent, and these, added to the opinions of all travelers and explorers, all proving as completely the same truth. With every one who would form his conclusions from the judgments of others, or with whom the opinions of others would have any weight, these authorities would be considered sufficient; and an examination of the subject will, with any one, work the same conviction.

But, sir, the highest southern authority [Mr. CALHOUN] tells us, that the Union is in danger, and that the cause of the danger is the almost universal discontent produced by "the belief of 'the people of the southern States—as prevalent as 'the discontent itself—that they cannot remain, as 'things now are, consistently with honor and safety 'in the Union.'" This is important language. "As things *now are*," the South cannot remain in the Union; and if we *change*, except in the particular line which they indicate, the result is to be the same. This is bringing the North to a straight gate and narrow way indeed. It is possible that this statement might obtain some credence, if there was any possible foundation for such a belief; but as it is, I am sure few, very few, will pay any regard to it.

We are told by the same authority, that the principal cause for this belief, is, because "the 'equilibrium between the two sections of the



'Government, as it stood when the Constitution was ratified, has been destroyed.' I had supposed that the *Government* had not in early times consisted in, or been composed of, *sections*, but that the *Government* was a unit, even though the States might, unfortunately, class themselves into sections. But what was the equilibrium? Was it the fact that all were slave States? No, sir, but an equality between the free and the slave States, in population, weight, influence, and representation. Did such an equilibrium ever exist? Why, sir, at the time of the ratification of the Constitution, the northern section contained seven States, with fourteen Senators and thirty-five Representatives, and the southern section but six States, with thirty Representatives and twelve Senators. The next State which came into the Union was Vermont, adding one more to the northern section, two to its Senatorial and two to its Representative delegation; and for the first twenty-three years after the ratification of the Constitution, there was but a period of six years when the northern section did not exceed the southern, in respect of numbers and representation in both houses of Congress; and more than this, it was never intended that there should be such an equilibrium. At the adoption of the Constitution, although there were more States in the northern than in the southern section, yet even then, provision was made by the ordinance of 1787 for adding four more States to the Union, which were to be forever free—thus having, in prospect and in contemplation, eleven free States and six slave States. Nor is there any evidence that the framers of the Constitution, or the people of any of the States, then anticipated any greater or different number of either, except an increase of the number of free States, as contemplated by the ordinance of 1787, or by some of the other then slave States becoming free by manumission, or emancipation. But it is said, that the ordinance of 1787 is one of the acts which has deprived the South of its share in the territories. If this be so, it was a *southern measure*. Every southern State voted for it *unanimously*. If, then, this measure has wronged the South, they are responsible for it. Jefferson, Madison, and the whole southern delegation in Congress were responsible for it. It was their act. Let the South, then, not reproach the North for the ordinance 1787.

We are told that the Missouri compromise was another aggressive measure; but was not this, too, a southern measure? It passed the House of Representatives by a majority of southern votes—thirty-eight southern votes being for it and thirty-seven against it, while of the southern States, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky voted for it either by their entire delegations, or majorities of them; and Virginia, Georgia, and Louisiana voted against it—South Carolina being divided in her vote. If this measure is one, then, which has disturbed the equilibrium spoken of, it can by no means be charged upon the North.

The exclusion of slavery from Oregon is another item charged by the same authority to the same account. But was not this a mere piece of super-legislation? Was not slavery already excluded from Oregon by the act of March 6, 1820? There can be no doubt of this, nor can there be any doubt that its exclusion by that act was by a ma-

jority of southern votes. The clause in the Oregon bill added nothing to the restriction, and slavery would have been as effectually excluded if that bill had been silent on the subject.

Mr. Chairman, what do gentlemen from the South desire? Do they wish all the territory acquired to remain slave territory? Except California, there has never been a foot of land acquired by this Government which was not slave territory. First came Louisiana, with her vast domain, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the frozen North, and from the Mississippi to the Pacific ocean. Then came Florida, and then Texas—"great, and vast, and illimitable Texas"—each of them all, and all of each being slave territory. Texas alone is nearly as large as California, and capable of sustaining a population ten times as great, if not ten times greater, than all our territory west of the Rocky mountains. This is no inconsiderable matter. In posting up, it is hardly correct to have figures which stand for cents taken and counted as dollars. No equilibrium of States, of territory, of population, of interests, ever was originally contemplated—ever existed or can exist; and any attempt to effect any such equilibrium, would be attended with more difficulty and trouble than can ever result from the absence of such equilibrium.

There has been a great deal said of the revenues and expenditures of the Government—that the former are so arranged as to be oppressive, and the latter unjust, to the South. If this be so, it is a great wrong; but until I hear some fact or argument adduced, to support this statement in relation to the revenues, I shall not discuss it. But so far as the disbursements are concerned, I have procured an examination to be made by one of the most intelligent clerks of this city, at the cost of great care and labor, showing the amount expended in the United States for all local appropriations (omitting for navy-yards, the Military Academy, and District of Columbia) for a period of ten years, by which it appears that the amount expended North is \$10,024,702, and the amount expended South is \$9,110,956. This gives, on the census of 1840, at the rate of \$1.02 7-10 for every free white person in the North; and at the rate of \$1.90 for every free white person at the South; and on the basis of the entire population, whites, free negroes, slaves and all, it gives at the rate of \$1.01 for each person at the North, and \$1.21 for each person at the South; while on the basis of the presidential vote of 1848, the amount appropriated North averages \$0.50 5-10 for each voter, and at the South, \$1.01 8-10 for each voter, or more than twice as much at the South as at the North.

I have the utmost confidence in the correctness of these figures, and I challenge their refutation. Is it not strange, then, Mr. Chairman, that our southern friends should have worked themselves into the belief—which I have no doubt they honestly entertain—that the expenditures of this Government have been made unjustly to the South?

Again, sir, one gentleman has instanced the number of light-houses at the North, as another evidence that the South has not received her share of public favor. He has told us that the light-houses at the North flashed their lights upon the waters thick as the stars of Heaven, while at the South they were left in darkness; but I find by



examination that the *expenses* for floating lights, light-houses, beacons, and buoys, including salaries of keepers for the year ending June 30, 1849, were, in the free States, \$156,586.79 1-3; and in the slave States, \$167,422.26—making the *expense* greater in the South than in the North by \$10,835.46 2-3. So much for this point.

But, Mr. Chairman, several gentlemen, both here and in the other end of the Capitol, have relied upon an article in a late number of the Democratic Review to show that the North is reaping upward of \$88,000,000 from its connection with the South, while it is careful not to show that the South derives any benefit from the North. I know not who is the author of that article—an article which displays in many respects much ability, but its partial statements and errors never ought to have been allowed a place in that journal. The following table among others has been quoted to show the dependence of the North upon the South:

Freights of northern shipping on southern produce.....	\$40,186,728
Profits derived on imports at the North for southern account.....	9,000,000
Profits of exchange operations.....	1,000,000
Profits on northern manufactures sold at the South.....	22,250,000
Profits on western produce descending the Mississippi.....	10,000,000
Profits on northern capital employed at the South.....	6,000,000

Total earnings of the North per annum.....\$88,436,728

This, sir, is reckoning up accounts at a dash, but it is reckoning without the host. Is it not as advantageous for the South to have her produce carried, as it is for the North to carry it? And if it is not, why do they not carry it themselves? And if this labor performed by the North injures the South, do not others who perform labor for the South injure her in like manner? The item of \$9,000,000, "profits derived on imports at the North for southern account," is based on the assumption that the South consumes as much as the North—an assumption wholly unwarrantable and without proof. But were it correct, how would it be offset by "*profits derived to the South from exports on northern account?*" and how would "profits on northern manufactures sold at the South" be offset by "*profits on southern produce sold at the North?*" And how would "profits on western produce descending the Mississippi be offset by *profits to the South from having the Mississippi flow at all?*" The one charge is as proper and as pertinent as the other; and how would "profits on northern capital employed at the South" be balanced by *profits to the South from the use of northern capital?* And as the writer makes very gravely a part of this item of \$6,000,000 to consist of "amounts expended by southerners coming North in the summer season," how very nicely could be posted up against that, *instruction to the South in polkas and cotillons at Saratoga, comforts by sea-baths and clam-bakes at Newport, and wonders at sights of the sea-serpent off Nahant?* by no means omitting the item for *tuition by Yankee schoolmasters at the South in the winter season.* If there is anything trivial in this reply, the answer is, that the reply partakes of the nature of the proposition. Any suppositions drawn from such tables, that the North derives exclusive advantages from, and at the expense of, the South, is not only frivolous but foolish.

There is a matter to which I will refer in this connection, which I have never heard spoken of in way of complaint by the North, or scarcely noticed at all. Nor do I allude to it in way of complaint, but to sustain the position which I have taken—I refer to the revenues and expenses of the Post-Office Department. For the exposition of this matter I have taken two years, not knowing that they differ in results from other years. I take the year ending the 31st March, 1833, and the year ending June 30, 1847. Sir, the first year I find the amount of postage received in free States was \$1,109,709 92, and the expenditures in the same was \$970,946 43; while the amount received in the slave States for postage was \$591,622 83; and the expenditure in the same time was \$961,935 27—leaving the revenue over the expenditures at the North \$138,763 49, and the deficit at the South from the expenditure exceeding the revenue \$370,312 44. Take, again, the latter year. In the free States the revenue was \$1,659,412, and the expenditures \$1,083,307. In the South the revenue was \$684,079, and the expenditures \$1,318,511—making a surplus North of \$571,104, and a deficit South of \$654,462. I make no complaint on this occasion; but I very much fear, if this difference were reversed, and had been in existence for twenty or thirty years, or more, that we should hear much of oppression and injustice, if not threats of "modes and measures of redress."

It has been stated, Mr. Chairman, that of the troops *employed* in the war with Mexico, the South furnished nearly twice as many as the North, and that, as the acquisition of California was the consequence of that war, that the South has peculiar claims from that circumstance to a full participation in the enjoyment of that acquisition. I shall not question the right of every portion of the country to participate in that enjoyment, but I wish to correct a misapprehension growing out of that statement, particularly so when that statement was deemed of sufficient importance to be put forth with the more than famous Southern Address. This misapprehension has been caused by taking the *number* of volunteers—including those illegally and irregularly called and mustered, whether they performed service or not—instead of the *amount* of service performed. The *number* includes many who served but a very short time, or were discharged without any service; so that the quotas furnished by no means show the proper fact to be sought for, which is, the *amount of service* performed. The report of the Secretary of War shows the States to have furnished volunteers for that war as follows:

Massachusetts.....	1,057	Maryland and District	
New York.....	2,396	of Columbia.....	1,355
New Jersey.....	425	Virginia.....	1,320
Pennsylvania.....	2,503	North Carolina.....	935
Ohio.....	5,536	South Carolina.....	1,077
Michigan.....	1,103	Georgia.....	2,132
Indiana.....	4,585	Alabama.....	3,026
Illinois.....	6,123	Mississippi.....	2,423
Wisconsin.....	146	Louisiana.....	7,947
Iowa.....	253	Tennessee.....	5,865
Mormons.....	585	Kentucky.....	4,842
		Missouri.....	7,016
From free States....	24,712	Arkansas.....	1,323
		Florida.....	370
		Texas.....	8,018

From slave States...47,649

Difference in favor of slave States, 22,937.

This includes all the volunteers in service in that



war, except the California enlistments, which number five hundred and seventy-one, and certain re-enlisted volunteers numbering eight hundred and forty-four. There were enlisted also twenty-one thousand and eighteen men for the old regiments during the war, and thirteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-one men for the ten new regiments, including the voltigeurs. Taking two thirds of these as northern enlistments—which I am satisfied is less than the real number—we have forty-eight thousand and fifty-two northern men, and fifty-nine thousand three hundred and eighteen southern men. But to ascertain the *amount of service* during the war, we must deduct one thousand and forty-five from the Texan volunteers raised in 1845, and from the lists of Alabama, Texas, Missouri, Ohio, and other States—those who were raised before the war, or were discharged without service, and without leaving their place of rendezvous, or the State where raised. From this, also, should be deducted those volunteers illegally called out, who served but for a few days or weeks; for it is certainly unfair to include those who obtained positions only on account of their proximity to the seat of war, and who were disbanded almost immediately after their organization. If this is done, we shall find that the North furnished the largest number of men for service in that war; and computing the *amount of service* rendered by the volunteers of each State, as accurately as can be done without taking the time of each man separately, and it will be as follows:

	Months.		Months.
Massachusetts.....	15,800	Maryland and District	
New York.....	29,700	of Columbia.....	15,000
Pennsylvania.....	38,200	Virginia.....	9,100
New Jersey.....	4,600	North Carolina.....	14,100
Ohio.....	54,600	South Carolina.....	17,200
Indiana.....	73,800	Georgia.....	23,900
Illinois.....	75,100	Alabama.....	13,100
Michigan.....	8,100	Mississippi.....	25,100
Wisconsin.....	1,800	Louisiana.....	28,300
Iowa.....	2,100	Tennessee.....	48,000
Mormons.....	5,600	Kentucky.....	49,200
		Missouri.....	65,700
Total.....	309,400	Arkansas.....	12,800
		Florida.....	3,000
Difference.....	56,100	Texas.....	41,000
			365,500

The difference in favor of the South is about equal to two full regiments for the war. This estimate does not include the ten regiments or the regulars who enlisted *for the war*, and on account of the war. Were these included, it would be found that the North furnished service equal to 813,648 months, and the South equal to 627,625 months, making a difference in favor of the North of 186,013 months. If there is any doubt on these points, I will cheerfully unite with gentlemen in passing a resolution of inquiry, which would not only give us valuable information as to the *amount of service* furnished by each State respectively, but forever settle the question. I would be much gratified in this, for I believe my own State furnished more service than any other State in the Union.

Similar was it in the war of 1812. The South furnished the greatest number of volunteers; but the North the largest *amount of service*. I have prepared tables of the militia and volunteers in that

war, which show the number of officers and soldiers from each State, as follows:

NORTHERN STATES.	Officers.	Non-com. officers.	Soldiers.
New Hampshire .....	335	676	4,944
Massachusetts .....	2,514	5,314	38,853
Rhode Island.....	63	110	737
Connecticut .....	800	1,532	7,871
Vermont.....	400	691	4,145
New York.....	5,719	10,682	61,495
New Jersey.....	396	808	4,808
Pennsylvania.....	2,170	3,679	23,369
Ohio.....	1,806	3,407	19,490
Indiana.....	240	430	2,710
Illinois.....	123	233	2,001
Michigan.....	41	66	448
Illinois Rangers.....	32	83	855
Indiana Rangers.....	62	158	893
	14,701	27,869	172,619
Aggregate North.....			215,189

  

SOUTHERN STATES.	Officers.	Non-com. officers.	Soldiers.
Delaware.....	234	449	3,155
Maryland.....	3,517	5,879	43,263
Virginia.....	5,623	11,219	75,049
North Carolina.....	760	1,250	12,127
South Carolina.....	644	1,236	9,343
Georgia.....	742	1,185	9,630
Kentucky.....	1,371	2,307	16,561
Tennessee.....	2,046	3,357	22,430
Louisiana.....	686	1,273	7,727
Missouri.....	116	197	1,243
Mississippi.....	430	827	5,098
District of Columbia....	309	526	3,712
Missouri Rangers.....	21	72	809
	16,599	29,777	210,147
Aggregate South.....			256,433

A large portion of these volunteers served for a few days or weeks only, so that very little indication is given of the amount of service; but I know the North furnished her full share—bitterly Federal and anti-war as was then most of New England. But if the regulars are included, and their service computed, it will be found to amount to about 620,000 months' service for the North, and 310,000 months for the South. It has been a subject of remark, by the officers of the departments, for more than thirty years, that three fourths or four fifths of all the enlistments, both for the army and navy, were made at the North.

While upon this subject, Mr. Chairman, it occurred to me to ascertain the number of troops in the revolutionary war, and in the subsequent Indian and border troubles—the latter of which I shall publish with my speech.\* For the continental line of the Revolution, the North furnished 172,436 men, and the South 59,335 men—a difference in favor of the North of 113,101 men. I have no means of determining the length of service.

But, sir, these comparisons are all disagreeable to me, nor would they be made, except in reply to those already drawn to the prejudice of the North. So far as the South has cause of com-

\* In Wayne's army, 2,843 men; in Seminole war, 413 officers and 5,498 men; Black-Hawk war, 491 officers and 4,540 men; Florida war, 1,621 officers and 28,332 men; Creek disturbances, 794 officers and 11,689 men; South-western frontier, 161 officers and 2,642 men; Cherokee country, 236 officers and 3,690 men; New York frontier, 115 officers and 1,031 men.



plaint against the North or citizens of the North—and I know they have cause—I for one am ready to coöperate at once in the passage of such laws as shall enforce the requirements of the Constitution. But the South must get over their extreme sensitiveness, because of Abolition speeches made or papers published at the North. Why, sir, I wish the Clerk to read some remarks made in the Legislature of Virginia in the session of 1832-3. [The Clerk read as follows:]

“Slavery is ruinous to the whites, retards improvement, roots out industrious population, banishes the yeomanry of the country, deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter of employment and support. This evil admits no remedy; it is increasing, and will continue to increase, until the whole country will be inundated with one black wave, covering its whole extent, with a few white faces floating on the surface. The master has no capital but what is invested in human flesh. The father, instead of being richer for his sons, is at a loss how to provide for them. There is no diversity of occupations—no incentive to enterprise. Labor of every species is disreputable, because performed mostly by slaves. Our towns are stationary, our villages almost everywhere declining, and the general aspect of the country marks the curse of a wasteful, idle, reckless population, who have no interest in the soil, and care not how much it is impoverished.”

This language was spoken by Mr. Marshall of Fauquier county, and similar, if not stronger, language was used by other distinguished gentlemen of that State on the same occasion; but we hear of no such language now being used there; and if the like should be uttered by a northern man, or printed in a northern paper, and circulated South, a fearful clamor would follow. Sir, I see no propriety in the Abolition furor, which has raged in the minds of certain northern fanatics, which leads them to disregard law, constitutional obligations—everything—in the vain pursuit of this one idea. I scorn and despise all fanaticism, whether originated and fostered in the salt, coal, or cod-fish regions of the North, or in the cotton fields of the South; and while I am compelled to say, that in my opinion northern fanatics originated this excitement, I am further compelled to say, that I believe it never would have grown into consequence but for southern countenance, southern carping, and southern morbid sensitiveness.

And now, having reviewed these topics, let me ask, is there anything in the question of the admission of California, or in any of these alleged causes of complaint, to justify the excitement we have seen, and the threats we have heard in this House? And yet, a deplorable state of things has been upon us—is still upon us—growing out of this question. Why is it, that after so long a career of prosperity, the result of union, of harmony, and good-will—when the eyes of the oppressed of mankind are turned to us in hope, and their hearts in prayer to Heaven for our success—when every American sentiment ought to be in unison, and every American arm ought to be exerted for our common good—why is it, that distrust, discord, and disunion of feeling, distract our councils, enervate our strength, and stamp every brow with care and anxiety? Why is it, that legislation halts in her course, and finds her place usurped, and the time that should be devoted to her, occupied by the devotees of passion, of bitterness, of denunciation? Why is it, that hints, threats, and calculations for the dissolution of the Union, are made by those who, as all believed a few days ago, would cheerfully have offered their lives for its perpetuity? Why is it, sir, that the

gallant spirits who but yesterday stood shoulder to shoulder in a common cause, to meet the shock of war, are to-day ready to disband their glorious army, put themselves in hostile array against each other, and with muskets loaded, and cannons pointed, stand awaiting only the word of some more reckless mutineer, to commence the work of fraternal murder? And all for what? Because of a petty quarrel about dividing the spoils of the camp! Is it pride that would thus lead us to our destruction? Has the happiness on which we have rioted produced a surfeit? Have abstractions blinded us to realities? Have fancied duties and obligations to a part, made us forget our duties and obligations to the whole? Sir, I fear that there is a political, a mental, a moral disease, which has broken out in our land, both North and South, more to be dreaded than any pestilence which ever depopulated cities, or carried desolation among the nations of the earth. Would to God that some physician might appear, endowed, qualified—commissioned, if it might be, by God himself—to arrest, to eradicate this terrible malady! But, sir, let us not despair, but set about reconciling at once, these conflicting views, and harmonizing these discordant elements. Let the North and the South yield their extreme opinions; and let the great West and Northwest, where ultraisms less prevail, now become—as those portions of the Union are destined to become—the regulating power of the country, and all will soon be settled to the satisfaction of all sections of the Union. Admit California at once, provide territorial governments for the remainder of the territories, without offensive and unnecessary provisos, adjust the Texan boundary, abolish the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and provide for enforcing the guaranties of the Constitution. Thus will all be arranged—union will again appear among us, and harmony once more prevail in all our deliberations. I hope, sir, it will be done, and done speedily.

But a convention is to be held at Nashville which is to cure all these ills. And how—by what means? Sir, if that convention meets at all, it will meet in my judgment for disunion; if not for that, for what is it? Are the impulsive gentlemen of the South to assemble after their turgid proclamations and formal pronunciamientos, and resolve that slavery is a blessing, and then adjourn? Sir, that would be puerile; after what has taken place, anything will be puerile which is not violent. If it meets, it will be for no ceremonies nor formalities. Its call was made to depend on a contingency which has not happened; yet we are told that the convention will go on. When we ask southern gentlemen what it will do, they tell us they “cannot say what it will do, but it will take care to protect the honor of the South, and to provide for the redress of grievances.” Sir, it is for disunion, and nothing but disunion.

Mr. THOMPSON, of Mississippi, (Mr. HARRIS yielding the floor,) begged to say a single word in reply to the question of the gentleman from Illinois. The gentleman had said that the object of this convention was disunion. Now, he was well assured by those who were competent to speak of the purposes of this convention, that it contemplated no such thing. They allege that its object is to establish some secure platform, on which all the southern States may be able to



take their stand, for the preservation of their common rights and their honor, now menaced by the North.

Mr. HARRIS. I perfectly understand the whole thing. It is disunion, and nothing but disunion. A platform—a platform on which to stand? What better platform is there—can there be—than the Constitution? It is a platform on which every true-hearted American can stand, and stand securely forever. Shame, shame on the man who can, without a blush, proposes to substitute for that sacred instrument, formed by the great, the wise, and the good of our ancestors, under the benignant auspices of God himself, any petty, paltry, sectional platform, made, or to be made at Hartford, at Nashville, or elsewhere! If such a convention does meet, and for such a purpose, the citizens of Nashville will not allow its session for an hour. They will never permit their city to be made the den of a treasonable conclave. They will never give countenance to assassins of the Constitution. They will permit no such stain upon the page of their history, nor any such pollution to the soil which holds the bones of Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk. The Hartford Convention would be forgotten under the damning shame and infamy of one which, under any conceivable pretext that can now be made, would rend this Government into fragments—and that over the tombs of the illustrious dead of Tennessee.

But perhaps I attach more importance to this projected movement than it deserves. One thing is certain—the citizens of Nashville have ever been celebrated for their hospitality, and if such a convention does assemble there, its members will be recipients of it to the full extent of their merits. They will doubtless be well fed and clothed. Even the boys will see that they are plentifully supplied with stale eggs, and most appropriately and suitably clothed in respectable suits of tar and feathers.

I spoke, Mr. Chairman, of rending this Government into fragments—and would not any sort of separation so result? What sort of geographical or commercial affinity has Maryland and Virginia for Kentucky, or the valley States with the seaboard, or Texas with either. No, sir; as the venerable Senator from Texas exclaimed not long since, “Texas came into the Union of these States; when that Union ceases, Texas goes out.” Besides, the same causes which have driven slavery from the northern States, must soon drive it from Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri; and the work of disunion would have to be re-enacted. What folly, then, to agitate a proposition which by no possibility can confer a solitary advantage upon any one, but which must lead to disasters, to miseries, to horrors, which no mortal can describe or imagine.

The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] has gravely informed us, that if “this Government should be rent assunder, the mouth of the Mississippi will belong to the South.” This, sir, is a matter of no little importance to my constituents, and to the people of my State. And to put it beyond dispute, I propose a compromise, and that is, that the South shall hold the mouth of the Mississippi undisturbed, as they now do, *while the Union exists*, but I will make no pledges *after that*. I hope this proposition will be acceptable to that gentleman, for I am positive that it will be more

advantageous to the South than any other arrangement that possibly can be made.

The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. CLINGMAN] has been pleased to inform us that the cry of “Union” is “senseless and insane;” and he informs us further that he is “disgusted with it.” Sir, it is nothing new, in cases of mental hallucination, for those who are laboring under its influence, to fancy all persons insane but themselves. This seems to be a case in point; and I have no doubt that the constituents of that honorable gentleman, who is so grievously afflicted, will take good care, if they do not consign him to a mad-house, to place him in quiet retirement, which his complaints seem so much to require, and his conduct deserve.

And we have been further told by the honorable gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. STEPHENS,] that we cannot preserve the Union “by singing pæans to the Union.” This may be true; and yet, sir, I trust that pæans to the Union will never grate harshly on an American ear. To me there is richest music in the song of the Union, and from sentiments which were subsequently uttered by that gentleman, I am sure it is not disagreeable to him. With such a theme for song, well might the great poet apply his test to determine who it is that are

“Fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils.”

I love to listen to every expression of devotion to this Union. Such has ever been my delight; nor can I hear, without the deepest interest and emotion, sentiments “for Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.” They are those high and holy sentiments which are chambered in the consecrated recesses of patriotic hearts, and come forth on occasions of great public concernment or peril.

Sir, I have always been a party man. My convictions upon the general questions of party have been deep and controlling. I have been found acting with that party whose principles and measures were, and are, in my judgment, best calculated to promote the welfare of the whole country. I have ever been a Democrat; and it is my conviction now, that had the patriotic Senator from Michigan been elected to the presidency, we would have been spared the dangers and excitements which have distracted the country and this House. He was defeated—by what means I need not now say; it is a sufficient vindication of his views, that the doctrine of non-intervention, as advocated by him, has now been approved by the great leaders of the Whig party. But, sir, I must act in conformity with things as they exist, and as my sense of duty directs. In times of public peril, party as party should become *nothing*, and our country as our country should become *everything*. And I say here to-day, that whenever my vote may be needed, or my assistance be of service in maintaining the integrity of this Union, they shall be ready; and in such an emergency, I shall stand by this or any other Administration, so long and so faithfully as it stands by the Constitution.

But, Mr. Chairman, let all these schemes, thoughts, and speculations for disunion, be abandoned. Let them, with their originators and supporters, be consigned to those realms of discord and pits of horror, where they belong. *DISUNION*, sir? Gentlemen do not know the meaning of the



word they use. DISUNION is the dissolution of all government—the dissolution of society. Dissolution is war—civil, desolating war. When the sections of this Confederacy are so far alienated from each other as to endure disunion, they are so far alienated as to produce collision. I need not speculate on the immediate causes, whether it would be the questioned right to navigate the Mississippi, disturbed commercial relations, attempts to secure absconding runaways, or the mere love of martial renown. A collision would take place, forces would be increased, and opposing armies would be in the field. In such an event, carry yourself in imagination to some lofty peak of the Alleghanies, from whence you may behold all parts of this vast country at a glance; where now commerce moves her busy throng; where cheerful labor drives his team a-field, or plies his busy implements; where peace presides; where virtue dwells in security; where happiness has made her constant home, and claimed us all as her children; all would be changed. The thunder of cannon, the shock of charging squadrons, the shouts of combatants, the glitter of arms, the smoke from desolated towns, the flames from burning dwellings, the shrieks of women and children, would unite to complete the scene of

horror—the consummation of calamity. But when the imagination is exceeded by the reality; when the land is made desolate; when your commerce is destroyed; when all means are exhausted in the prolonged and dreadful contests; when patriotism is supplanted by selfishness; when nationality ceases; when the American flag is seen no more; when “discord reigns forever,” then, and not till then, will gentlemen who use it know the full meaning of the word DISUNION.

But this cannot be. There is a necessity which binds us together, as immovable as the mountain’s range, and as lasting as the flow of the mighty rivers of the West. Nothing can avoid it—nothing can remove it; time only adds to its strength. The glories of the past, the happiness of the present, the hopes of the future, all increase its strength and influence to bind us together; and so shall they continue to increase to the latest generation. Let us cherish this spirit of union; sustained and enlivened by it, our Constitution,

—“like a spirit of fire  
Shrined in its own grand element,”

shall remain a lasting and a living light, to guide the people and the nations of the earth to the highest summit of political happiness and social perfection.